



The Real McCarthy Record

Decades after the death of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, twice-elected United States Senator from Wisconsin, the term “McCarthyism” is still widely used as a convenient and easily understood epithet for all that is evil and despicable in the world of politics. Hardly a month passes without some reference to “McCarthyism” in the print or electronic media. Despite the frequency with which the term is invoked, however, it is quite clear that not one critic of McCarthy in a hundred has the slightest idea of what he said and did during that controversial period from 1950 to 1954.

Whether Joe McCarthy was right or wrong, it is important that we know the truth about him. If he was wrong, then we can learn some important lessons for the future. If he was right, then we need to be vitally concerned about the issues he raised because virtually nothing has been done to deal effectively with those issues since the mid-1950s.

This article will attempt to answer many of the questions asked about Joe McCarthy and the criticisms directed at him. The responses are based on years of study of McCarthy’s speeches and writings, congressional hearings in which he was involved, and more than a score of books about him, most of them highly critical and condemnatory.

I. The Years Before 1950

Q. Was Joe McCarthy a lax and unethical judge?

A. Joe McCarthy was elected as a circuit judge in Wisconsin in 1939 and took over a district court that had a backlog of more than 200 cases. By eliminating a lot of legal red tape and working long hours (his court remained open past midnight at least a dozen times), Judge McCarthy cleared up the backlog quickly and, in the words of one local newspaper, “administered justice promptly and with a combination of legal knowledge and good sense.” On October 28, 1940, the *Milwaukee Journal* editorialized: “Breaking with the ‘horse-and-buggy’ tradition that has tied up the calendars of most Wisconsin circuit courts, young Judge Joseph R. McCarthy of Appleton has streamlined his tenth district ... and has made a hit with lawyers and litigants alike.”

Q. Did McCarthy exaggerate his military record in World War II?

A. Although his judgeship exempted him from military service, McCarthy enlisted in the Marines and was sworn in as a first lieutenant in August 1942. He served as an intelligence officer for a bomber squadron stationed in the Solomon Islands and had the responsibility of briefing and debriefing pilots before and after their missions. McCarthy also risked his life by volunteering to fly in the tail-gunner’s seat on many combat missions. Those who quibble about the number of combat missions he flew miss the point — he didn’t have to fly any.

The enemies of McCarthy have seized on his good-natured remark about shooting down coconut trees from his tail-gunner’s spot (ABC’s three-hour movie about McCarthy in 1977 was entitled *Tail Gunner Joe*) to belittle his military accomplishments, but the official record gives the true picture. Not only were McCarthy’s achievements during 30 months of active duty unanimously praised by his commanding officers, but Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, issued the following citation regarding the service of Captain McCarthy:

For meritorious and efficient performance of duty as an observer and rear gunner of a dive bomber attached to a Marine scout bombing squadron operating in the Solomon Islands area from



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

September 1 to December 31, 1943. He participated in a large number of combat missions, and in addition to his regular duties, acted as aerial photographer. He obtained excellent photographs of enemy gun positions, despite intense anti-aircraft fire, thereby gaining valuable information which contributed materially to the success of subsequent strikes in the area. Although suffering from a severe leg injury, he refused to be hospitalized and continued to carry out his duties as Intelligence Officer in a highly efficient manner. His courageous devotion to duty was in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.

Q. Was McCarthy backed by the Communists in his 1946 campaign for the U.S. Senate?

A. In 1946, Joe McCarthy upset incumbent U.S. Senator Robert La Follette by 5,378 votes in the Republican primary and went on to beat Democrat Howard McMurray by 251,658 votes in the general election. The Communist Party of Wisconsin had originally circulated petitions to place its own candidate on the ballot as an Independent in the general election. When McCarthy scored his surprising victory over La Follette, the Communists did not file the petitions for their candidate, but rallied instead behind McMurray. Thus, Joe McCarthy defeated a Democratic-Communist coalition in 1946.

Q. Had Joe McCarthy ever spoken out against Communism prior to his famous speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1950?

A. Those who contend that McCarthy stumbled across Communism while searching for an issue to use in his 1952 reelection campaign will be disappointed to know that the Senator had been speaking out against Communism for years. He made Communism an issue in his campaign against Howard McMurray in 1946, charging that McMurray had received the endorsement of the *Daily Worker*, the Communist Party newspaper. In April 1947, McCarthy told the *Madison Capital Times* that his top priority was “to stop the spread of Communism.” On the *Meet the Press* radio show in July of that year, the Wisconsin Senator said: “We’ve been at war with Russia for some time now, and Russia has been winning this war at a faster rate than we were, during the last stages of the last war. Everyone is painfully aware of the fact that we are at war — and that we’re losing it.”

During a speech in Milwaukee in 1952, Senator McCarthy dated the public phase of his fight against Communists to May 22, 1949, the night that former Secretary of Defense James Forrestal was found dead on the ground outside Bethesda Naval Hospital. “The Communists hounded Forrestal to his death,” said McCarthy. “They killed him just as definitely as if they had thrown him from that sixteenth-story window in Bethesda Naval Hospital.” He said that “while I am not a sentimental man, I was touched deeply and left numb by the news of Forrestal’s murder. But I was affected much more deeply when I heard of the Communist celebration when they heard of Forrestal’s murder. On that night, I dedicated part of this fight to Jim Forrestal.”

Thus, Joe McCarthy was receptive in the fall of 1949 when three men brought to his office a 100-page FBI report alleging extensive Communist penetration of the State Department. The trio had asked three other Senators to awaken the American people to this dangerous situation, but only McCarthy was willing to take on this volatile project.

II. A Lone Senator (1950-1952)

Q. What was the security situation in the State Department at the time of McCarthy’s Wheeling speech in February 1950?

A. Communist infiltration of the State Department began in the 1930s. On September 2, 1939, former Communist Whittaker Chambers provided Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle with the names and



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

Communist connections of two dozen spies in the government, including Alger Hiss. Berle took the information to President Roosevelt, but FDR laughed it off. Hiss moved rapidly up the State Department ladder and served as an advisor to Roosevelt at the disastrous Yalta Conference in 1945 that paved the way for the Soviet conquest of Central and Eastern Europe. Hiss also functioned as the secretary general of the founding meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco, helped to draft the UN Charter, and later filled dozens of positions at the UN with American Communists before he was publicly exposed as a Soviet spy by Whittaker Chambers in 1948.

The security problem at the State Department had worsened considerably in 1945 when a merger brought into the State Department thousands of employees from such war agencies as the Office of Strategic Services, the Office of War Information, and the Foreign Economic Administration — all of which were riddled with members of the communist underground. J. Anthony Panuch, the State Department official charged with supervising the 1945 merger, told a Senate committee in 1953 that “the biggest single thing that contributed to the infiltration of the State Department was the merger of 1945. The effects of that are still being felt.” In 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall and Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson engineered the firing of Panuch and the removal of every key member of his security staff.

In June 1947, a Senate Appropriations subcommittee addressed a secret memorandum to Secretary Marshall, calling to his attention a condition that “developed and still flourishes in the State Department under the administration of Dean Acheson. It is evident that there is a deliberate, calculated program being carried out not only to protect communist personnel in high places but to reduce security and intelligence protection to a nullity. On file in the department is a copy of a preliminary report of the FBI on Soviet espionage activities in the United States which involves a large number of State Department employees, some in high official positions.”

The memorandum listed the names of nine of these State Department officials and said that they were “only a few of the hundreds now employed in varying capacities who are protected and allowed to remain despite the fact that their presence is an obvious hazard to national security. There is also the extensive employment in highly classified positions of admitted homosexuals, who are historically known to be security risks.” On June 24, 1947, Assistant Secretary of State John Peurifoy notified the chairman of the Senate subcommittee that ten persons had been dismissed from the department, five of whom had been listed in the memorandum. But from June 1947 until McCarthy’s speech in February 1950, the State Department did not fire one person as a loyalty or security risk. In other branches of the government, however, more than 300 persons were discharged for loyalty reasons alone during the period from 1947 to 1951.

It was also during the mid-to-late Forties that communist sympathizers in the State Department played a key role in the subjugation of mainland China by the Reds. “It is my judgment, and I was in the State Department at the time,” said former Ambassador William D. Pawley, “that this whole fiasco, the loss of China and the subsequent difficulties with which the United States has been faced, was the result of mistaken policy of Dean Acheson, Phil Jessup, [Owen] Lattimore, John Carter Vincent, John Service, John Davies, [O.E.] Clubb, and others.” Asked if he thought the mistaken policy was the result of “sincere mistakes of judgment,” Pawley replied: “No, I don’t.”

Q. Was Joe McCarthy the only member of Congress critical of those whose policies had put 400 million Chinese into Communist slavery?

A. No, there were others who were equally disturbed. For instance, on January 30, 1949, one year



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

before McCarthy's Wheeling speech, a young Congressman from Massachusetts deplored "the disasters befalling China and the United States" and declared that "it is of the utmost importance that we search out and spotlight those who must bear the responsibility for our present predicament." The Congressman placed a major part of the blame on "a sick Roosevelt," General George Marshall, and "our diplomats and their advisors, the Lattimores and the Fairbanks," and he concluded: "This is the tragic story of China whose freedom we once fought to preserve. What our young men had saved, our diplomats and our President have frittered away." The Congressman's name was John F. Kennedy.

Q. What did McCarthy actually say in his Wheeling speech?

A. Addressing the Ohio County Women's Republican Club on February 9, 1950, Senator McCarthy first quoted from Marx, Lenin, and Stalin their stated goal of world conquest and said that "today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity." He blamed the fall of China and other countries to the Communists in the previous six years on "the traitorous actions" of the State Department's "bright young men," and he mentioned specifically John S. Service, Gustavo Duran, Mary Jane Kenny (it should have been Keeney), Julian Wadleigh, Dr. Harlow Shapley, Alger Hiss, and Dean Acheson. The part of the speech that catapulted McCarthy from relative obscurity into the national spotlight contained these words:

I have in my hand 57 cases of individuals who would appear to be either card-carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.

Q. Wasn't it reported that McCarthy used the number 205 in his Wheeling speech, lowered it to 57 later, and then raised it again to 81?

A. Yes, this was reported, and here is the explanation: In the Wheeling speech, McCarthy referred to a letter that Secretary of State James Byrnes sent to Congressman Adolph Sabath in 1946. In that letter, Byrnes said that State Department security investigators had declared 284 persons unfit to hold jobs in the department because of Communist connections and other reasons, but that only 79 had been discharged, leaving 205 still on the State Department's payroll. McCarthy told his Wheeling audience that while he did not have the names of the 205 mentioned in the Byrnes letter, he did have the names of 57 who were either members of or loyal to the Communist Party. On February 20, 1950, McCarthy gave the Senate information about 81 individuals — the 57 referred to at Wheeling and 24 others of less importance and about whom the evidence was less conclusive.

The enemies of McCarthy have juggled these numbers around to make the Senator appear to be erratic and to distract attention from the paramount question: Were there still Alger Hisses in the State Department betraying this nation? McCarthy was not being inconsistent in his use of the numbers; the 57 and 81 were part of the 205 mentioned in the Byrnes letter.

Q. Was it fair for McCarthy to make all those names public and ruin reputations?

A. That is precisely why McCarthy did not make the names public. Four times during the February 20 speech, Senator Scott Lucas demanded that McCarthy make the 81 names public, but McCarthy refused to do so, responding that "if I were to give all the names involved, it might leave a wrong impression. If we should label one man a Communist when he is not a Communist, I think it would be too bad." What McCarthy did was to identify the individuals only by case numbers, not by their names.

By the way, it took McCarthy some six hours to make that February 20 speech because of harassment by hostile Senators, four of whom — Scott Lucas, Brien McMahon, Garrett Withers, and Herbert



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

Lehman — interrupted him a total of 123 times. It should also be noted that McCarthy was not indicting the entire State Department. He said that “the vast majority of the employees of the State Department are loyal” and that he was only after the ones who had demonstrated a loyalty to the Soviet Union or to the Communist Party.

Further, McCarthy admitted that “some of these individuals whose cases I am giving the Senate are no longer in the State Department. A sizable number of them are not. Some of them have transferred to other government work, work allied with the State Department. Others have been transferred to the United Nations.” Senator Karl Mundt supported McCarthy on this point by noting that “one of the great difficulties we confront in trying to get Communists out of government is that apparently once they have been removed from one department there is no alert given to the other departments, so they simply drift from one department to another.”

Q. What was the purpose of the Tydings Committee?

A. The Tydings Committee was a subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that was set up in February 1950 to conduct “a full and complete study and investigation as to whether persons who are disloyal to the United States are, or have been, employed by the Department of State.” The chairman of the subcommittee, Senator Millard Tydings, a Democrat, set the tone for the hearings on the first day when he told McCarthy: “You are in the position of being the man who occasioned this hearing, and so far as I am concerned in this committee you are going to get one of the most complete investigations ever given in the history of this Republic, so far as my abilities will permit.”

After 31 days of hearings, during which McCarthy presented public evidence on nine persons (Dorothy Kenyon, Haldore Hanson, Philip Jessup, Esther Brunauer, Frederick Schuman, Harlow Shapley, Gustavo Duran, John Stewart Service, and Owen Lattimore), the Tydings Committee labeled McCarthy’s charges a “fraud” and a “hoax,” said that the individuals on his list were neither communist nor pro-communist, and concluded that the State Department had an effective security program.

Q. Did the Tydings Committee carry out its mandate?

A. Not by a long shot. The Tydings Committee never investigated State Department security at all and did not come close to conducting the “full and complete study and investigation” it was supposed to conduct. Tydings and his Democratic colleagues, Brien McMahon and Theodore Green, subjected McCarthy to considerable interruptions and heckling, prompting Senator Henry Cabot Lodge to protest that McCarthy “never gets a fair shake” in trying to present his evidence in an orderly fashion. So persistent were the interruptions and statements of the Democratic trio during the first two days of the hearings that McCarthy was allowed only a total of 17 1/2 minutes of direct testimony.

While the Democrats were hostile to McCarthy and to any witnesses that could confirm his charges, they fawned all over the six individuals who appeared before the committee to deny McCarthy’s accusations. Tydings, McMahon, and Green not only treated Philip Jessup like a hero, for one example, but refused to let McCarthy present his full case against Jessup or to cross-examine him. Furthermore, the committee majority declined to call more than 20 witnesses whom Senator Bourke Hickenlooper thought were important to the investigation. And when Senator Lodge read into the record 19 questions that he thought should be answered before the committee exonerated the State Department’s security system, not only did the Democrats ignore the questions, but some member of the committee or the staff deleted from the official transcript of the hearings the 19 questions as well as other testimony that made the committee look bad. The deleted material amounted to 35 typewritten pages.



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

It is clear then that the Tydings Committee did not carry out its mandate and that the words “fraud” and “hoax” more accurately describe the Tydings Report than they do McCarthy’s charges.

There is one other dirty trick played on McCarthy by Senator Tydings that should be mentioned because it shows how dishonest McCarthy’s enemies were. McCarthy wanted to present his information in closed sessions, but Tydings insisted on public sessions. So when McCarthy arrived at the first hearing, he gave reporters a press release about Dorothy Kenyon, his first case. Tydings then told McCarthy publicly that he could give his evidence in executive session if he wished and gave him two minutes to make up his mind. Since the committee had already rejected his request for closed sessions, and since he had already given the press material about his first case, McCarthy told Tydings that “we will have to proceed with this one in open session.”

As deceitful as Tydings was in trying to make McCarthy appear to be responsible for public hearings, the reporters who were present were just as bad. They knew what Tydings was trying to do, and yet they joined in spreading this malicious falsehood about McCarthy.

Q. So, was McCarthy right or wrong about the State Department?

A. He was right. Of the 110 names that McCarthy gave to the Tydings Committee to be investigated, 62 of them were employed by the State Department at the time of the hearings. The committee cleared everyone on McCarthy’s list, but within a year the State Department started proceedings against 49 of the 62. By the end of 1954, 81 of those on McCarthy’s list had left the government either by dismissal or resignation.

Q. Can you cite some particular examples?

A. Sure. Let’s take three of McCarthy’s nine public cases — those of John Stewart Service, Philip Jessup, and Owen Lattimore.* Five years before McCarthy mentioned the name of John Stewart Service, Service was arrested for giving classified documents to the editors of *Amerasia*, a communist magazine. The Truman Administration, however, managed to cover up the espionage scandal and Service was never punished for his crime. McCarthy also produced considerable evidence that Service had been “part of the pro-Soviet group” that wanted to bring Communism to China, but the Tydings Committee said that Service was “not disloyal, pro-Communist, or a security risk.” Over the next 18 months, the State Department’s Loyalty Security Board cleared Service four more times, but finally, in December 1951, the Civil Service Commission Loyalty Review Board found that there was “reasonable doubt” as to his loyalty and ousted him from the State Department.

Was the career of Service ruined by this decision? Not on your life. The Supreme Court reinstated him in 1956 and Service was the American consul in Liverpool, England, until his retirement in 1962. He then joined the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley and visited Red China in the fall of 1971 at the invitation of communist tyrant Chou En-lai. Following his return from the country he helped to communize, Service wrote four articles for the *New York Times* and was the subject of a laudatory cover interview in *Parade* magazine.

All that Joe McCarthy said about Philip Jessup was that he had an “unusual affinity for Communist causes.” The record shows that Jessup belonged to at least five Communist-controlled fronts, that he associated closely with Communists, and that he was an influential member of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), which the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) described in 1952 as “a vehicle used by Communists to orientate American Far Eastern policy toward Communist objectives.” The SISS also reported that 46 persons connected with the IPR while Jessup was a leading light there



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

had been named under oath as members of the Communist Party.

The Senate apparently felt that McCarthy was closer to the truth than the Tydings Committee because in 1951 it rejected Jessup's nomination as a delegate to the United Nations. After the Senate adjourned, however, President Truman appointed him anyway. In 1960, President Eisenhower named Jessup to represent the United States on the International Court of Justice, and Jessup served on the World Court until 1969. He died in 1986.

Owen Lattimore was one of the principal architects of the State Department's pro-Communist foreign policy in the Far East. In a closed session of the Tydings Committee, Senator McCarthy called Lattimore "the top Russian spy" in the department. (That charge, by the way, was leaked to the public not by McCarthy but by columnist Drew Pearson.) McCarthy later modified his statement on Lattimore, saying that "I may have perhaps placed too much stress on the question of whether or not he has been an espionage agent," and went on to say that "thirteen different witnesses have testified under oath to Lattimore's Communist membership or party-line activities." Although the Tydings Committee cleared Lattimore of all charges, another Senate committee, the Internal Security Subcommittee, vindicated Joe McCarthy when it declared in 1952 that "Owen Lattimore was, from some time beginning in the 1930s, a conscious articulate instrument of the Soviet conspiracy."

Was Lattimore hurt by this or by his subsequent indictment for perjury? Of course not. He continued on the faculty of Johns Hopkins University, went to Communist Outer Mongolia for the Kennedy State Department in 1961, became head of a new Chinese studies department at Leeds University in England in 1963, and returned to the United States in the Seventies for speeches and lectures. On January 28 of this year, Lattimore told the Associated Press from his home in Rhode Island that the Reagan administration's decision to establish diplomatic ties with communist Mongolia was "long overdue."

Q. Even if McCarthy was right about Service, Jessup, and Lattimore, weren't there hundreds of others who were publicly smeared by him?

A. This is one of the most enduring myths about McCarthy, and it is completely false. It is a fact, said Buckley and Bozell in *McCarthy and His Enemies*, that from February 9, 1950, until January 1, 1953, Joe McCarthy publicly questioned the loyalty or reliability of a grand total of 46 persons, and particularly dramatized the cases of only 24 of the 46. We have just talked about three of the Senator's major targets, and Buckley and Bozell pointed out that McCarthy "never said anything more damaging about Lauchlin Currie, Gustavo Duran, Theodore Geiger, Mary Jane Keeney, Edward Posniak, Haldore Hanson, and John Carter Vincent, than that they are known to one or more responsible persons as having been members of the Communist Party, which is in each of these instances true."

While McCarthy may have exaggerated the significance of the evidence against some other individuals, his record on the whole is extremely good. (This is also true of the 1953-54 period when he was chairman of a Senate committee and publicly exposed 114 persons, most of whom refused to answer questions about communist or espionage activities on the ground that their answers might tend to incriminate them.) There were no innocent victims of McCarthyism. Those whom McCarthy accused had indeed collaborated in varying degrees with Communism and Communists, had shown no remorse for their actions, and thoroughly deserved whatever scorn was directed at them.

Q. What about McCarthy's attack on General George Marshall? Wasn't that a smear of a great man?

A. This is a reference to the 60,000-word speech he delivered on the Senate floor on June 14, 1951 (later published as a book entitled *America's Retreat From Victory*). One interesting thing about the



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

speech is that McCarthy drew almost entirely from sources friendly to Marshall in discussing nearly a score of his actions and policies that had helped the Communists in the USSR, Europe, China, and Korea. "I do not propose to go into his motives," said McCarthy. "Unless one has all the tangled and often complicated circumstances contributing to a man's decisions, an inquiry into his motives is often fruitless. I do not pretend to understand General Marshall's nature and character, and I shall leave that subject to subtler analysts of human personality."

One may agree or disagree with McCarthy's statement that America's steady retreat from victory "must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man. A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men." That statement was very controversial in 1951, but after 36 years of no-win wars in Korea and Vietnam, along with Soviet expansionism throughout the world, aided and abetted in large measure by U.S. policymakers, it doesn't seem so controversial anymore. In any case, before judging McCarthy on what he is supposed to have said about Marshall, we recommend reading the book to find out what he actually said and to see how extensive was his documentation.

Q. Can it be true that State Department policy toward the Communists didn't change very much even after McCarthy helped get many pro-Communists out of the department?

A. Unfortunately, it is true. McCarthy, you see, only scratched the surface. He did prompt a tightening of security procedures for a while, and the State Department and other sensitive federal agencies dismissed nearly 4,000 employees in 1953 and 1954, although many of them shifted to nonsensitive departments. Some of these security risks returned to their old agencies when security was virtually scrapped during the Kennedy Administration.

During the mid-1950s, a State Department security specialist named Otto Otepka reviewed the files of all department personnel and found some kind of derogatory information on 1,943 persons, almost 20 percent of the total payroll. He told the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee years later that of the 1,943 employees, 722 "left the department for various reasons, but mostly by transfer to other agencies, before a final security determination was made." Otepka trimmed the remaining number on the list to 858 and in December 1955 sent their names to his boss, Scott McLeod, as persons to be watched because of communist associations, homosexuality, habitual drunkenness, or mental illness.

McLeod's staff reviewed the Otepka list and narrowed it down to 258 persons who were judged to be "serious" security risks. "Approximately 150 were in high-level posts where they could in one way or another influence the formulation of United States foreign policy," said William J. Gill, author of *The Ordeal of Otto Otepka*. "And fully half of these 258 serious cases were officials in either crucial Intelligence assignments or serving on top-secret committees reaching all the way up and into the National Security Council." As many as 175 of the 258 were still in important policy posts as of the mid-1960s, but Otto Otepka had been ousted from the State Department by that time and we are not aware of anyone like Otepka keeping track of security risks since then — and that was more than 20 years ago.

Considering the State Department's virtually unbroken record over the past 30 years of undermining anti-communist governments and backing communist regimes, of putting Soviet desires ahead of American interests, of allowing 200 Soviet nationals to work and spy for years in our embassy in Moscow, and of bitterly opposing Reagan administration efforts in 1986 to reduce the massive Soviet espionage presence at the United Nations by one-third, it is not unreasonable to wonder how many



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

heirs of Alger Hiss are still making policy there.

Bear in mind, too, that Communist penetration of the U.S. government was not confined to the State Department. On July 30, 1953, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, chaired by Senator William Jenner, released its report on Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments. Among its conclusions:

1. The Soviet international organization has carried on a successful and important penetration of the United States Government and this penetration has not been fully exposed.
2. This penetration has extended from the lower ranks to top-level policy and operating positions in our government.
3. The agents of this penetration have operated in accordance with a distinct design fashioned by their Soviet superiors.
4. Members of this conspiracy helped to get each other into government, helped each other to rise in government, and protected each other from exposure.

Summarizing the 1952 testimony of former Soviet courier Elizabeth Bentley, who had identified 37 Soviet agents within the U.S. government, the subcommittee also said that “to her knowledge there were four Soviet espionage rings operating within our government and that only two of these have been exposed.” In October 1953, a Soviet defector named Colonel Ismail Ege estimated that a minimum of 20 spy networks were operating within the United States in 1941-1942, when he was chief of the Fourth Section of Soviet General Staff Intelligence. Thirty-four years after Ege’s testimony, these espionage rings and networks still have not been publicly exposed.

On February 5, 1987, the *New York Times* reported that an 18-month investigation by the House Intelligence Committee “had uncovered ‘dangerous laxity’ and serious ‘security failures’ in the government’s system of catching spies. Even though 27 Americans have been charged with espionage in the last two years, and all but one of those brought to trial have been found guilty, the committee said in a report that it still found ‘a puzzling, almost nonchalant attitude toward recent espionage cases on the part of some senior U.S. intelligence officials.’” According to the *Times*, “the investigation found ‘faulty hiring practices, poor management of probationary employees, thoughtless firing practices, lax security practices, inadequate interagency cooperation — even bungled surveillance of a prime espionage suspect.’”

The same “nonchalant attitude” toward communist spies that Joe McCarthy denounced in the early 1950s still exists today. Only there is no Joe McCarthy in the Senate urging that something be done to correct this dangerous situation. Nor are there any congressional committees investigating communist subversion in government. The destruction of Joe McCarthy not only removed him from the fight, it also sent a powerful message to anyone else who might be contemplating a similar battle: Try to ferret Communists and pro-Communists out of the government and you will be harassed, smeared, and ultimately destroyed.

Q. But why do we need congressional committees? Can’t the FBI do the job?

A. The function of the FBI is to gather information and pass it along to the agency or department where the security problem exists. If the FBI report is ignored, or if the department does take action and is overruled by a review board, only a congressional committee can expose and remedy this situation. Some examples: In December 1945, the FBI sent President Truman a report showing that his Assistant



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

Secretary of the Treasury, Harry Dexter White, was a Soviet spy. Truman ignored the warning and, early in 1946, promoted White to executive director of the U.S. Mission to the International Monetary Fund. The FBI sent Truman a second report, but again he did nothing. White resigned from the government in 1947, and his communist ties were exposed by Elizabeth Bentley when she appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1948.

The FBI warned the State Department in the mid-1940s of extensive communist penetration of the department, but the warning was disregarded for the most part. It was not until Joe McCarthy turned the spotlight on the situation that dozens of security risks were removed. The FBI had also sent some 40 confidential reports about the communist activities of Edward Rothchild, an employee of the Government Printing Office, but Rothchild wasn't removed from his sensitive position until his background was exposed by the McCarthy Committee in 1953.

III. Committee Chairman (1953-54)

Q. Granted that congressional investigating committees can serve an important purpose, weren't McCarthy's methods terrible and didn't he subject witnesses to awful harassment?

A. Now we're into an entirely different phase of McCarthy's career. For three years, he had been one lone Senator crying in the wilderness. With the Republicans taking control of the Senate in January 1953, however, Joe McCarthy became chairman of the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee. No longer did he have to rely solely upon public speeches to inform the American people of the Communist threat to America. He was now chairman of a Senate committee with a mandate to search out graft, incompetence, and disloyalty inside the vast reaches of the American government.

As for McCarthy's methods, they were no different from those of other senators who were generally applauded for vigorous cross-examination of organized crime figures, for instance. The question of methods seems to come up only when subversives or spies are on the witness stand. And those who most loudly deplored McCarthy's methods often resorted to the foulest methods themselves, including the use of lies, half-truths, and innuendos designed to stir up hysteria against him. What some people seemingly do not understand is that Communists are evildoers and that those who give aid and comfort to Communists — whether they are called dupes, fellow travelers, liberals, or progressives — are also evildoers who should be exposed and removed from positions of influence.

Traitors and spies in high places are not easy to identify. They do not wear sweatshirts with the hammer and sickle emblazoned on the front. Only painstaking investigation and exhaustive questioning can reveal them as enemies. So why all the condemnation for those who expose spies and none for the spies themselves? Why didn't McCarthy's critics expose a traitor now and then and show everyone how much better they could do it? No, it was much easier to hound out of public life such determined enemies of the Reds as Martin Dies, Parnell Thomas, and Joe McCarthy than to muster the courage to face up to the howling communist wolfpack themselves.

Q. So, McCarthy's treatment of persons appearing before his committee was not as bad as has been reported?

A. Exactly. Let's look at the record. During 1953 and the first three months of 1954 (McCarthy was immobilized for the remainder of 1954 by two investigations of him), McCarthy's committee held 199 days of hearings and examined 653 witnesses. These individuals first appeared in executive session and were told of the evidence against them. If they were able to offer satisfactory explanations — and most of them were — they were dismissed and nobody ever knew they had been summoned.



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

Those who appeared in public sessions were either hardened Fifth Amendment pleaders or persons about whom there was a reasonably strong presumption of guilt. But even those witnesses who were brazen, insulting, and defiant were afforded their constitutional rights to confer with their counsel before answering a question (something they would not be allowed to do in a courtroom), to confront their accusers or at least have them identified and have questions submitted to them by their counsel, and to invoke the First and Fifth Amendments rather than answer questions about their alleged communist associations.

Of the 653 persons called by the McCarthy Committee during that 15-month period, 83 refused to answer questions about communist or espionage activities on constitutional grounds and their names were made public. Nine additional witnesses invoked the Fifth Amendment in executive session, but their names were not made public. Some of the 83 were working or had worked for the Army, the Navy, the Government Printing Office, the Treasury Department, the Office of War Information, the Office of Strategic Services, the Veterans Administration, and the United Nations. Others were or had been employed at the Federal Telecommunications Laboratories in New Jersey, the secret radar laboratories of the Army Signal Corps in New Jersey, and General Electric defense plants in Massachusetts and New York. Nineteen of the 83, including such well-known communist propagandists as James S. Allen, Herbert Aptheker, and Earl Browder, were summoned because their writings were being carried in U.S. Information Service libraries around the world.

Charles E. Ford, an attorney for Edward Rothschild in the Government Printing Office hearings, was so impressed with McCarthy's fairness toward his client that he declared: "I think the committee session at this day and in this place is most admirable and most American." Peter Gragis, who appeared before the McCarthy Committee on March 10, 1954, said that he had come to the hearing terrified because the press "had pointed out that you were very abusive, that you were crucifying people.... My experience has been quite the contrary. I have, I think, been very understandingly treated. I have been, I think, highly respected despite the fact that for some 20 years I had been more or less an active Communist."

Q. Weren't McCarthy and some members of his staff guilty of "book-burning" and causing a ruckus in Europe in 1953?

A. This accusation was made in reference to the committee's inquiry into communist influences in State Department libraries overseas. In his book *McCarthy*, Roy Cohn, the committee's chief counsel, conceded that he and committee staffer David Schine "unwittingly handed Joe McCarthy's enemies a perfect opportunity to spread the tale that a couple of young, inexperienced clowns were bustling about Europe, ordering State Department officials around, burning books, creating chaos wherever they went, and disrupting foreign relations." In point of fact, however, the trip and subsequent hearings by the committee provided information that led to the removal of more than 30,000 communist and pro-communist books from U.S. Information Service libraries in foreign countries. The presence of such books was in obvious conflict with the stated purpose of those libraries: "to promote better understanding of America abroad" and "to combat and expose Soviet communistic propaganda."

Q. But didn't McCarthy summon to those hearings a man whose major sin was having written a book on college football 21 years before?

A. In March 1953, the McCarthy Committee did hear testimony from Reed Harris, deputy head of the State Department's International Information Administration and author of *King Football*. Harris' book, however, was not confined to football. The author also advocated that Communists and Socialists be allowed to teach in colleges and said that hungry people in America, after "watching gangsters and



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

corrupt politicians gulp joyously from the horn of plenty,” just might “decide that even the horrors of those days of fighting which inaugurated the era of communism in Russia would be preferable to the present state of affairs” in the United States.

The following colloquy between Harris and Senator John McClellan is never quoted by McCarthy’s critics:

McClellan: Here is what I am concerned about. In the first place, I will ask you this: If it should be established that a person entertained the views and philosophies that you expressed in that book, would you consider that person suitable or fit to hold a position in the Voice of America which you now hold?

Harris: I would not.

McClellan: You would not employ such a person, would you?

Harris: I would not, Senator.

McClellan: Now we find you in that position.

Harris: That is correct.

Before shedding any tears for Harris, who resigned his post in April 1953, be advised that when anti-McCarthy hysteric Edward R. Murrow took over the U.S. Information Agency in 1961, he hired Reed Harris as his deputy, proving once again that the only true victim of McCarthyism was Joe McCarthy himself.

Q. But what about that poor old black woman that McCarthy falsely accused of being a Communist?

A. That woman was Annie Lee Moss, who lost her job working with classified messages at the Pentagon after an FBI undercover operative testified that she was a member of the Communist Party. When she appeared before the McCarthy Committee early in 1954, Moss, who lived at 72 R Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., denied she was a Communist. Her defenders accused McCarthy of confusing Moss with another woman with a similar name at a different address. Edward R. Murrow made the woman a heroine on his television program and the anti-McCarthy press trumpeted this episode as typical of McCarthy’s abominations.

And so things stood until September 1958 when the Subversive Activities Control Board reported that copies of the Communist Party’s own records showed that “one Annie Lee Moss, 72 R Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., was a party member in the mid-1940s.” Moss got her Pentagon job back in 1954 and was still working for the Army in December 1958.

Q. Moss might have gotten her job back, but what about all those individuals who lost their jobs in defense plants?

A. During its probe of 13 defense plants whose contracts with the government ran into hundreds of millions of dollars a year, the McCarthy Committee heard 101 witnesses, two of whom — William H. Teto and Herman E. Thomas — provided the committee with information about the Red spy network and the efforts of the Communists to set up cells in the plants. The committee’s exposures led to the dismissal of 32 persons and the tightening of security regulations at the plants. The president of General Electric, for example, issued a policy statement expressing concern about “the possible danger to the safety and security of company property and personnel whenever a General Electric employee admits he is a Communist or when he asserts before a competent investigating government body that he might incriminate himself by giving truthful answers concerning his Communist affiliations or his



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

possible espionage or sabotage activities.”

At the time McCarthy’s investigations were halted early in 1954, his probers had accumulated evidence involving an additional 155 defense workers, but he was never able to question those individuals under oath. On January 12, 1959, Congressman Gordon Scherer, a member of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, said that he knew of a minimum of 2,000 “potential espionage agents and saboteurs” working in the nation’s defense plants. But there have been no congressional investigations in this vital area since Senator McCarthy was stymied in 1954.

Q. What were the Fort Monmouth hearings all about? Weren’t all of those fired eventually given back their jobs?

A. The Army Signal Corps installation at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, was one of the nation’s most vital security posts since the three research centers housed there were engaged in developing defensive devices designed to protect America from an atomic attack. Julius Rosenberg, who was executed in 1953 for selling U.S. atomic secrets to the Soviet Union, worked as an inspector at Fort Monmouth from 1940 to 1945 and maintained his Signal Corps contacts for at least another two years after that. From 1949 to 1953, the FBI had been warning the Army about security risks at Fort Monmouth, but the Army paid little or no attention to the reports of subversion until the McCarthy investigation began in 1953.

During 1953 and 1954, the McCarthy Committee, acting on reports of communist infiltration from civilian employees, Army officers, and enlisted personnel, heard 71 witnesses at executive sessions and 41 at open hearings. The Army responded by suspending or discharging 35 persons as security risks, but when these cases reached the Army Loyalty and Screening Board at the Pentagon, all but two of the suspected security risks were reinstated and given back pay. McCarthy demanded the names of the 20 civilians on the review board and, when he threatened to subpoena them, the Eisenhower administration, at a meeting in Attorney General Herbert Brownell’s office on January 21, 1954, began plotting to stop McCarthy’s investigations once and for all.

Yes, virtually all of those suspended were eventually restored to duty at Fort Monmouth and anti-McCarthyites have cited this as proof that McCarthy had failed once again to substantiate his allegations. But vindication of McCarthy came later, when the Army’s top-secret operations at Fort Monmouth were quietly moved to Arizona. In his 1979 book *With No Apologies*, Senator Barry Goldwater explained the reason for the move:

Carl Hayden, who in January 1955 became chairman of the powerful Appropriations Committee of the United States Senate, told me privately Monmouth had been moved because he and other members of the majority Democratic Party were convinced security at Monmouth had been penetrated. They didn’t want to admit that McCarthy was right in his accusations. Their only alternative was to move the installation from New Jersey to a new location in Arizona.

Q. Speaking of the Army, what was the name of that dentist that McCarthy said was a Communist?

A. His name was Irving Peress, and here is some background information. In December 1953, an Army general alerted Senator McCarthy to the incredible story of this New York dentist who was drafted into the Army as a captain in October 1952; who refused a month later to answer questions on a Defense Department form about membership in subversive organizations; who was recommended for dismissal by the Surgeon General of the Army in April 1953; but who requested and received a promotion to major the following October. Roy Cohn gave the facts on Peress to Army Counsel John G. Adams in December 1953, and Adams promised to do something about it.



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

When still no action had been taken on Peress a month later, McCarthy subpoenaed him before the committee on January 30, 1954. Peress took the Fifth Amendment 20 times when asked about his membership in the Communist Party, his attendance at a communist training school, and his efforts to recruit military personnel into the party. Two days later, McCarthy sent a letter to Army Secretary Robert Stevens by special messenger, reviewing the testimony of Peress and requesting that he be court-martialed and that the Army find out who promoted Peress, knowing that he was a Communist. On that same day, February 1, Peress asked for an honorable separation from the Army, which he promptly received the next day from his commanding officer at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, Brigadier General Ralph W. Zwicker.

McCarthy took the next logical step and summoned General Zwicker to a closed session of the committee on February 18. There was no reason at that time for McCarthy to suppose that Zwicker would be anything but a frank and cooperative witness. In separate conversations with two McCarthy staff members, on January 22 and February 13, Zwicker had said that he was familiar with Peress' communist connections and that he was opposed to giving him an honorable discharge, but that he was ordered to do so by someone at the Pentagon.

When he appeared before McCarthy, however, Zwicker was evasive, hostile, and uncooperative. He changed his story three times when asked if he had known at the time he signed the discharge that Peress had refused to answer questions before the McCarthy Committee. McCarthy became increasingly exasperated and, when Zwicker, in response to a hypothetical question, said that he would not remove from the military a general who originated the order for the honorable discharge of a communist major, knowing that he was a Communist, McCarthy told Zwicker that he was not fit to wear the uniform of a general.

Q. So McCarthy really did "abuse" Zwicker and impugn his patriotism as the critics have charged?

A. Let's jump ahead three years and get Zwicker's own assessment of his testimony that took place on February 18, 1954. At a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 21, 1957, the General stated: "I think there are some circumstances ... that would certainly tend to give a person the idea that perhaps I was recalcitrant, perhaps I was holding back, and perhaps I wasn't too cooperative.... I am afraid I was perhaps overcautious and perhaps on the defensive, and that this feeling ... may have inclined me to be not as forthright, perhaps, in answering the questions put to me as I might have been otherwise."

That wasn't the only time that General Zwicker was less than forthright. In testimony before the McClellan Committee (formerly the McCarthy Committee) on March 23, 1955, Zwicker denied giving McCarthy staffer George Anastos derogatory information about Irving Peress in their telephone conversation of January 22, 1954. When Anastos and the secretary who had monitored the conversation both testified under oath and contradicted Zwicker, the McClellan Committee forwarded the transcript of the hearing to the Justice Department for possible prosecution of Zwicker for perjury. After sitting on the matter for 19 months, the Justice Department finally, in December 1956, declined to undertake criminal prosecution of Zwicker for "technical" reasons.

On April 1, 1957, the Senate approved a promotion for Zwicker by a vote of 70 to two, with Senators McCarthy and George Malone opposed. All the members of the Senate had gotten a phone call from the Pentagon or the White House urging them to vote for Zwicker. The recalcitrant general served three more years in the Army before retiring.



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

Q. Does anyone know who did promote Peress and who told Zwicker to sign the communist major's honorable discharge?

A. After studying the 1955 McClellan hearings on the Peress case, Lionel Lokos, in his book *Who Promoted Peress?*, concluded that Colonel H.W. Glattly signed the letter to the adjutant general, recommending the promotion of Irving Peress; and Major James E. Harris, in the name of the adjutant general, signed Peress' letter of appointment to major. As for Peress' discharge, Army Counsel John Adams and Lieutenant General Walter L. Weible ordered General Zwicker to sign the honorable separation from the Army. The McClellan Committee sharply rebuked Adams for his action, saying that he "showed disrespect for this subcommittee when he chose to disregard Senator McCarthy's letter of February 1, 1954, and allowed Peress to be honorably discharged on February 2, 1954."

In its report on the Peress case, the McClellan Committee said that "some 48 errors of more than minor importance were committed by the Army in connection with the commissioning, transfer, promotion, and honorable discharge of Irving Peress." As a result, the Army made some sweeping changes in its security program, including a policy statement that said "the taking of the Fifth Amendment by an individual queried about his Communist affiliations is sufficient to warrant the issuance of a general discharge rather than an honorable discharge." That these reforms came about at all was due to the persistence of one Senator, Joe McCarthy, who displayed the courage to expose Peress against the wishes of the Army, the White House, and many of his fellow Republicans.

"No one will ever know," said Lionel Lokos, "what it cost Senator McCarthy to take the stand he did in the Peress case — what it cost him in terms of popularity and his political future. We only know that the price of asking 'Who Promoted Peress?' came high and that Senator McCarthy didn't hesitate to pay that price."

IV. Army-McCarthy Hearings

Q. What was the gist of the Army-McCarthy Hearings?

A. On March 11, 1954, the Army accused McCarthy and his staff of using improper means in seeking preferential treatment for G. David Schine, a consultant to McCarthy's committee, prior to and after Schine was drafted into the Army in November 1953. Senator McCarthy countercharged that these allegations were made in bad faith and were designed to prevent his committee from continuing its probe of communist subversion at Fort Monmouth and from issuing subpoenas for members of the Army Loyalty and Screening Board. A special committee, under the chairmanship of Senator Karl Mundt, was appointed to adjudicate these conflicting charges, and the hearings opened on April 22, 1954.

The televised hearings lasted for 36 days and were viewed by an estimated 20 million people. After hearing 32 witnesses and two million words of testimony, the committee concluded that McCarthy himself had not exercised any improper influence in behalf of David Schine, but that Roy Cohn, McCarthy's chief counsel, had engaged in some "unduly persistent or aggressive efforts" in behalf of Schine. The committee also concluded that Army Secretary Robert Stevens and Army Counsel John Adams "made efforts to terminate or influence the investigation and hearings at Fort Monmouth," and that Adams "made vigorous and diligent efforts" to block subpoenas for members of the Army Loyalty and Screening Board "by means of personal appeal to certain members of the [McCarthy] committee."

In a separate statement that concurred with the special committee report, Senator Everett Dirksen demonstrated the weakness of the Army case by noting that the Army did not make its charges public until eight months after the first allegedly improper effort was made in behalf of Schine (July 1953), and



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

then not until after Senator McCarthy had made it known (January 1954) that he would subpoena members of the Army Loyalty and Screening Board. Dirksen also called attention to a telephone conversation between Secretary Stevens and Senator Stuart Symington on March 8, 1954, three days before the Army allegations were made public. In that conversation, Stevens said that any charges of improper influence by McCarthy's staff "would prove to be very much exaggerated.... I am the Secretary and I have had some talks with the [McCarthy] committee and the chairman, and so on, and by and large as far as the treatment of me is concerned, I have no personal complaint."

In his 1984 book *Who Killed Joe McCarthy?*, former Eisenhower White House aide William Bragg Ewald Jr., who had access to many unpublished papers and memos from persons involved in the Army-McCarthy clash, confirms the good relations that existed between McCarthy and Stevens and the lack of pressure from McCarthy in behalf of Schine. In a phone conversation November 7, 1953, the Senator told the Secretary not to give Schine any special treatment, such as putting him in the service and assigning him back to the committee. McCarthy even said that Roy Cohn had been "completely unreasonable" about Schine, that "he thinks Dave should be a general and work from the penthouse of the Waldorf."

Ewald also reported a phone conversation between Stevens and Assistant Secretary of Defense Fred Seaton on January 8, 1954, in which Stevens admitted that Schine might not have been drafted if he hadn't worked for the McCarthy Committee. "Of course, the kid was taken at the very last minute before he would have been ineligible for age," said Stevens. "He is 26, you know. My guess would be that if he hadn't been working for McCarthy, he probably never would have been drafted."

Another thing confirmed by Ewald was the secret meeting at the Justice Department on January 21, 1954, when a group of anti-McCarthyites came up with a plan to stop McCarthy either by asking the Republican members of his committee to talk him out of subpoenaing members of the Army Loyalty and Screening Board or, if that didn't work, by drawing up a list of alleged efforts in behalf of David Schine and threatening to make the list public unless McCarthy backed off.

Those at the January 21 meeting were Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Ambassador to the UN Henry Cabot Lodge, Deputy Attorney General William Rogers, White House chief of staff Sherman Adams, White House aide Gerald Morgan, and John Adams. When John Adams inadvertently mentioned this meeting during the Army-McCarthy Hearings, and McCarthy wanted to find out more about it, President Eisenhower, on May 17, 1954, issued an executive order forbidding any employee of the Defense Department "to testify to any such conversations or communications or to produce any such documents or reproductions."

Q. Did the Army-McCarthy Hearings serve any good purpose?

A. Yes. Despite the inordinate focus on trivia and the clever distractions introduced by counsel for the Army Joseph Welch, the hearings alerted the American people as never before to the dangers of Communism. McCarthy's popularity in opinion polls had declined from 50 percent approval in January 1954 to 35 percent in May, but tens of millions still supported him. You would never know this from reading summaries of the hearings or from watching *Point of Order*, a 97-minute "documentary" (taken from 188 hours of television footage) that omitted virtually every incident favorable to McCarthy — and there were many of them — and included only those segments where McCarthy did not come across well. By showing McCarthy mainly when he was irritated or expressing his many "points of order," the film presents a distorted view of him.



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

Q. How about some examples of clever distractions?

A. Let's consider three tricks pulled by Joe Welch to divert people's attention away from the central issue of communist subversion:

(1) The "Cropped" Photograph. On April 26, a photo was introduced showing Secretary Stevens posing willingly for a smiling photograph with Private Schine at Fort Dix, New Jersey, on November 17, 1953, a time when Stevens was supposed to be upset with Schine for seeking special treatment from the Army. Welch produced another photo the next day showing the base commander in the picture with Stevens and Schine and said that the first one was "a shamefully cut-down version." But the innocent deletion of the base commander from the photograph did not change its basic meaning — that Stevens was not angry with Schine at a time that the Army said he was.

(2) The "Purloined" Document. On May 4, Senator McCarthy produced a 2 1/4-page document with the names of 34 subversives at Fort Monmouth, half of whom were still there. The document, which had been given to McCarthy by an intelligence officer in 1953, was a summary of a 15-page report that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had sent on January 26, 1951, to Major General A. R. Bolling, chief of Army Intelligence. Instead of being concerned that the Army had not acted on the FBI report and had not tried to root out the subversives at Fort Monmouth, Welch kept harping on how McCarthy got the summary and where it came from. McCarthy refused to tell him. Welch ascertained that Hoover had not written the 2 1/4-page document in McCarthy's possession and termed it "a carbon copy of precisely nothing." In point of fact, however, the document was an accurate summary of Hoover's original report, but Welch made it appear that McCarthy was presenting phony evidence.

(3) The Fred Fisher Episode. On June 9, the 30th day of the hearings, Welch was engaged in baiting Roy Cohn, challenging him to get 130 Communists or subversives out of defense plants "before the sun goes down." The treatment of Cohn angered McCarthy and he said that if Welch were so concerned about persons aiding the Communist Party, he should check on a man in his Boston law office named Fred Fisher, who had once belonged to the National Lawyers Guild, which Attorney General Brownell had called "the legal mouthpiece of the Communist Party." Welch then delivered the most famous lines from the Army-McCarthy Hearings, accusing McCarthy of "reckless cruelty" and concluding: "Let us not assassinate this lad further, Senator. You've done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last?"

The fact of the matter was that Fred Fisher's connection with the National Lawyers Guild had been widely publicized two months earlier. Page 12 of the April 16 *New York Times* had carried a picture of Fisher and a story about his removal from Welch's team because of his past association with the NLG. If Welch was so worried that McCarthy's remarks might inflict a lifelong "scar" on Fisher's reputation, why did he dramatize the incident in such histrionic fashion? The reason, of course, was that McCarthy had fallen into a trap in raising the Fisher issue, and Welch, superb showman that he was, played the scene for all it was worth. Was Fred Fisher hurt by the incident? Not at all. He became a partner in Welch's Boston law firm, Hale & Dorr, and was elected president of the Massachusetts Bar Association in the mid-1970s.

V. The Watkins Committee

Q. So the Senate finally censured Joe McCarthy for his conduct during the Army-McCarthy Hearings, right?

A. Wrong. McCarthy was not censured for his conduct in the Army-McCarthy Hearings or for anything



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

he had ever said or done in any hearings in which he had participated. Here are the facts: After McCarthy emerged unscathed from his bout with the Army, the Left launched a new campaign to discredit and destroy him. The campaign began on July 30, 1954, when Senator Ralph Flanders introduced a resolution accusing McCarthy of conduct “unbecoming a member of the United States Senate.” Flanders, who two months earlier had told the Senate that McCarthy’s “anti-Communism so completely parallels that of Adolf Hitler as to strike fear into the hearts of any defenseless minority,” had gotten his list of charges against McCarthy from a left-wing group called the National Committee for an Effective Congress.

McCarthy’s enemies ultimately accused him of 46 different counts of allegedly improper conduct and another special committee was set up, under the chairmanship of Senator Arthur Watkins, to study and evaluate the charges. Thus began the fifth investigation of Joe McCarthy in five years! After two months of hearings and deliberations, the Watkins Committee recommended that McCarthy be censured on only two of the 46 counts. So when a special session of the Senate convened on November 8, 1954, these were the two charges to be debated and voted on:

(1) That Senator McCarthy had “failed to cooperate” in 1952 with the Senate Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections that was looking into certain aspects of his private and political life in connection with a resolution for his expulsion from the Senate; and

(2) That in conducting a senatorial inquiry, Senator McCarthy had “intemperately abused” General Ralph Zwicker.

Many Senators were uneasy about the Zwicker count, particularly since the Army had shown contempt for committee chairman McCarthy by disregarding his letter of February 1, 1954, and honorably discharging Irving Peress the next day. For this reason, these Senators felt that McCarthy’s conduct toward Zwicker on February 18 was at least partially justified. So the Zwicker count was dropped at the last minute and in its place was this substitute charge:

(2) That Senator McCarthy, by characterizing the Watkins Committee as the “unwitting handmaiden” of the Communist Party and by describing the special Senate session as a “lynch party” and a “lynch bee,” had “acted contrary to senatorial ethics and tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute, to obstruct the constitutional processes of the Senate, and to impair its dignity.”

On December 2, 1954, the Senate voted to “condemn” Senator Joseph McCarthy on both counts by a vote of 67 to 22, with the Democrats unanimously in favor of condemnation and the Republicans split evenly.

Q. Was the Senate justified in condemning McCarthy on these counts?

A. No, it was not. Regarding the first count, failure to cooperate with the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections, the subcommittee never subpoenaed McCarthy but only “invited” him to testify; one Senator and two staff members resigned from the subcommittee because of its dishonesty towards McCarthy; and the subcommittee, in its final report, dated January 2, 1953, said that the matters under consideration “have become moot by reason of the 1952 election.” No Senator had ever been punished for something that had happened in a previous Congress or for declining an “invitation” to testify. By the way, the Justice Department and the Bureau of Internal Revenue investigated McCarthy’s finances and taxes for the period 1946 to 1952 and found no violations of the law. On April 19, 1955, the Internal Revenue awarded him a refund of \$1,046.75 for overpayment of taxes.

As for the second count, criticism of the Watkins Committee and the special Senate session, McCarthy



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

was condemned for opinions he had expressed outside the Senate. As David Lawrence pointed out in an editorial in the June 7, 1957 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, other senators had accused McCarthy of lying under oath, accepting influence money, engaging in election fraud, making libelous and false statements, practicing blackmail, doing the work of the Communists for them, and engaging in a questionable “personal relationship” with Roy Cohn and David Schine, but they were not censured for acting “contrary to senatorial ethics” or for impairing the “dignity” of the Senate.

The chief beneficiary of the Senate destruction of Joe McCarthy was the communist conspiracy (the Communist Party newspaper the *Daily Worker* had called the recommendations of the Watkins Committee “good news for America”). Former Communist Louis Budenz, who knew the inner workings of that conspiracy as well as anyone, said that the condemnation of McCarthy leaves the way open “to intimidate any person of consequence who moves against the conspiracy. The Communists made him their chief target because they wanted to make him a symbol to remind political leaders in America not to harm the conspiracy or its world conquest designs.” The history of the past 30 years confirms the tragic truth of Budenz’s statement.

Q. Who were the 22 Republican Senators who voted against the condemnation of Joe McCarthy?

A. More than a dozen Senators told McCarthy that they did not want to vote against him but had to because of the tremendous pressure being put on them by the White House and by leaders of both political parties. The 22 men who did put principle above politics were Senators Frank Barrett (Wyoming), Styles Bridges (New Hampshire), Ernest Brown (Nevada), John Marshall Butler (Maryland), Guy Cordon (Oregon), Everett Dirksen (Illinois), Henry Dworshak (Idaho), Barry Goldwater (Arizona), Bourke Hickenlooper (Iowa), Roman Hruska (Nebraska), William Jenner (Indiana), William Knowland (California), Thomas Kuchel (California), William Langer (North Dakota), George Malone (Nevada), Edward Martin (Pennsylvania), Eugene Millikin (Colorado), Karl Mundt (South Dakota), William Purtell (Connecticut), Andrew Schoeppel (Kansas), Herman Welker (Idaho), and Milton Young (North Dakota).

VI. The Years 1955-1957

Q. Did Joe McCarthy become a recluse in the 29 months between his condemnation and his death?

A. No, he did not. He worked hard at his senatorial duties. “To insist, as some have, that McCarthy was a shattered man after the censure is sheer nonsense,” said Brent Bozell, one of his aides at the time. “His intellect was as sharp as ever. When he addressed himself to a problem, he was perfectly capable of dealing with it.”

A member of the minority party in the Senate again, Joe McCarthy had to rely on public speeches to alert the American people to the menace of Communism. This he did in a number of important addresses during those two and a half years. He warned against attendance at summit conferences with the Reds, saying that “you cannot offer friendship to tyrants and murderers ... without advancing the cause of tyranny and murder.” He declared that “coexistence with Communists is neither possible nor honorable nor desirable. Our longterm objective must be the eradication of Communism from the face of the earth.”

Senator McCarthy was alone in calling for the use of force to defend the brave Hungarian people against Soviet aggression in 1956. He was virtually alone in warning that the Soviet Union was winning the missile race “because well-concealed Communists in the United States government are putting the brakes on our own guided-missile program.” He was prophetic in urging the Eisenhower administration to let “the free Asiatic peoples” fight to free their countrymen from communist slavery in Red China,



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

North Korea, and North Vietnam. “In justice to them, and in justice to the millions of American boys who will otherwise be called upon to sacrifice their lives in a total war against Communism,” said McCarthy, “we must permit our fighting allies, with our material and technical assistance, to carry the fight to the enemy.” This was not permitted and, a decade later, more than half a million American servicemen were fighting in South Vietnam.

Q. Did Joe McCarthy drink himself to death?

A. His enemies would like to have you think that. If McCarthy drank as much as his foes allege, for as many years as they allege, he would have had to be carried from speech to speech and from hearing to hearing, and he would have been unable to string two coherent sentences together. Did McCarthy look or act like a drunk during the 36 days of televised Army-McCarthy Hearings? No alcoholic could have accomplished all that McCarthy did, especially in so few years. Sure, Joe McCarthy drank, and he probably drank too much sometimes, but he did not drink during working hours, and any drinking he did do did not detract one iota from the seriousness of his fight against Communism or from the accuracy of his charges.

In the last two years of his life, McCarthy was greatly disappointed over the terrible injustice his Senate colleagues had done to him, and he certainly had his times of depression. Who wouldn’t after what he had been through? But he also had his times of elation, as when he and his wife adopted a baby girl in January 1957. The picture in Roy Cohn’s book of a smiling Joe McCarthy holding his new daughter is not the picture of a man drowning in alcohol. William Rusher was counsel to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee during 1956 and 1957 and met McCarthy repeatedly on social occasions. “He had at one time been a heavy drinker,” said Rusher of the Senator, “but in his last years was cautiously moderate; he died of a severe attack of hepatitis. He kept right on with a Senator’s usual chores up almost until the end.”

The end came on May 2, 1957 in Bethesda Naval Hospital. Thousands of people viewed the body in Washington, and McCarthy was the first Senator in 17 years to have funeral services in the Senate chamber. More than 30,000 Wisconsinites filed through St. Mary’s Church in the Senator’s hometown of Appleton to pay their last respects to him. Three Senators — George Malone, William Jenner, and Herman Welker — had flown from Washington to Appleton on the plane carrying McCarthy’s casket. “They had gone this far with Joe McCarthy,” said William Rusher. “They would go the rest of the way.”

VII. Some Final Questions

Q. Did McCarthy conduct a “reign of terror” in the 1950s?

A. This is one of two or three big lies that the Left continues to spread about McCarthy. The average American did not fear McCarthy; in fact the Gallup Poll reported in 1954 that the Senator was fourth on its list of most admired men. The only people terrorized by McCarthy were those who had something subversive to hide in their past and were afraid that they might eventually be exposed.

Oh, there was a “reign of terror” in the early Fifties, but it was conducted against Joe McCarthy, not by him. Those who were not afraid to denounce McCarthy week in and week out included the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Life*, Walter Lippmann, the Alsop brothers, Drew Pearson, Jack Anderson, the cartoonist Herblock, Edward R. Murrow, Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, and liberals from all walks of life. Reign of terror? During one 18-month period, the University of Wisconsin invited Eleanor Roosevelt, Norman Cousins, Owen Lattimore, and James Carey — all bitter anti-McCarthyites — to warn the students of McCarthy’s reign of terror.



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

James Burnham, author of *The Web of Subversion*, a classic study of communist penetration into the highest levels of the U.S. government, once reviewed the statistics of the so-called McCarthy terror:

Number of persons killed — zero.

Number of persons wounded or injured — zero.

Number of persons tortured — zero.

Number of persons arrested without warrant — zero.

Number of persons held or imprisoned without trial — zero.

Number of persons evicted, exiled, or deported — zero.

Number of persons deprived of due process — zero.

Q. Most of the books written about McCarthy say that he smeared thousands of innocent people. Is that true?

A. This is impossible since McCarthy never even mentioned thousands of people. At the most, he publicly exposed about 160 persons, all of whom had significant records of collaboration with or support for Communists and/or communist causes. Detractors of McCarthy, said Roy Cohn, “have to fall back on picayune things about whether he drank and had a liver condition, usually with a total distortion of the facts. They talk about the innocent people he destroyed. I have yet to have them give me one name. I have a standard answer — ‘name one.’ They usually come up with someone who came before some other committee, or Hollywood, or something which was never a focus of a McCarthy investigation.”

Here is one of literally dozens of examples of misinformation about McCarthy that could be cited: An article about Lillian Hellman in *Newsweek* for July 9, 1984, said that perhaps her most famous lines “were those she wrote in a statement to the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1952. ‘I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year’s fashions,’ she wrote, refusing to testify against her friends at the McCarthy hearings.” Miss Hellman could hardly have testified “at the McCarthy hearings” because there were no McCarthy hearings in 1952 and because Joe McCarthy was a Senator and was never involved in any House Committee hearings dealing with communist infiltration of the Hollywood film industry. And they accuse McCarthy of getting his facts wrong!

Q. These same books insist that Senator McCarthy never uncovered “a single Communist” in his five-year fight. Is that true?

A. Joe McCarthy was hated and denounced not because he smeared innocent people, but because he identified guilty people. Any list of identified Communists uncovered by McCarthy would have to include Lauchlin Currie, Gustavo Duran, Theodore Geiger, Mary Jane Keeney, Edward Posniak, Haldore Hanson, John Carter Vincent, Owen Lattimore, Edward Rothschild, Irving Peress, and Annie Lee Moss. But that’s not the whole story. McCarthy also exposed scores of others who may not have been identified as Communists, but who certainly were causing harm to national security from their posts in the State Department, the Pentagon, the Army, key defense plants, and the Government Printing Office. At the latter facility, which handled 250,000 pieces of secret and classified printing matter annually, the McCarthy probe resulted in the removal or further investigation by the FBI of 77 employees and a complete revamping of the security system at the GPO.

Was it unreasonable of McCarthy to want government positions filled with persons who were loyal to



Written by [Alias](#) on September 2, 1996

America, instead of those with communist-tainted backgrounds? “A government job is a privilege, not a right,” McCarthy said on more than one occasion. “There is no reason why men who chum with Communists, who refuse to turn their backs on traitors, and who are consistently found at the time and place where disaster strikes America and success comes to international Communism, should be given positions of power in government.” The motivation of these people really doesn’t matter. If the policies they advocate continually result in gains for Communism and losses for the Free World, then they should be replaced by persons with a more realistic understanding of the evil conspiracy that has subjugated more than one-third of the world. That’s not McCarthyism, that’s common sense.

Q. Most of the books in the libraries seem to be anti-McCarthy. Are there any pro-McCarthy books?

A. There are indeed, but most of them are out of print or not usually available in libraries. Here is a list: *McCarthy and His Enemies* by William Buckley and Brent Bozell; *McCarthy* by Roy Cohn; *The Assassination of Joe McCarthy* by Medford Evans; *The Lattimore Story* by John Flynn; *Who Promoted Peress?* by Lionel Lokos; three books by McCarthy himself — *Major Speeches and Debates of Senator Joe McCarthy 1950-1951*, *McCarthyism: The Fight for America*, and *America’s Retreat From Victory*; and a collection of tributes to McCarthy entitled *Memorial Addresses Delivered in Congress*.

Q. How then would you define McCarthyism?

A. McCarthyism was a serious attempt to remove from positions of influence the advocates of Communism, the willing and unwilling supporters of Communism and Communists, and persons who would prevent the removal of those who give aid and comfort to the enemies of America. Communist conspirators and their friends do not fear those who denounce Communism in general terms; they do greatly fear those who would expose their conspiratorial activities. That is why they hated and fought Joe McCarthy more than any other public figure in this century. That is why they have preserved his name as a club to hold over the head of anyone who dares to expose Communism.

The events of the past 30 years have proved McCarthy right, and those who want to halt the communist juggernaut today had better know the true story of McCarthyism. “The war against Communism cannot be won by wavering apologists,” said Mrs. J. B. Matthews back in 1961. “Victory begins with a realization that no one who fights Communism — not even a hypothetical god-like perfect man — can escape the liberaloid smear, and that smear image bears no relation to reality.”

Joe McCarthy was a brave and honest man. There was nothing cynical or devious about him. He said and did things for only one reason — he thought they were the right things to say and do. He was not perfect; he sometimes made errors of fact or judgment. But his record of accuracy and truthfulness far outshines that of his detractors. His vindication in the eyes of all Americans cannot come soon enough. Medford Evans put it well when he said: “The restoration of McCarthy ... is a necessary part of the restoration of America, for if we have not the national character to repent of the injustice we did him, nor in high places the intelligence to see that he was right, then it seems unlikely that we can or ought to survive.”

James J. Drummey is a former senior editor of The New American. This article appeared originally in the May 11, 1987 issue of the magazine.

* Evidence presented in the other six cases showed that two (Haldore Hanson and Gustavo Duran) had been identified as members of the Communist Party, that three (Dorothy Kenyon, Frederick Schuman, and Harlow Shapley) had extensive records of joining communist fronts and supporting communist causes, and that one (Esther Brunauer) had sufficient questionable associations to be dismissed from the State Department as a security risk in June 1952. For further details, see Chapter VII of *McCarthy and His Enemies* by William Buckley and Brent Bozell.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.